



ILLUSION AND THE REALITIES OF FARM LIFE

(Written Specially for The Bulletin.)

"Machinery instead of drudgery, science instead of guess-work—that's farming in 1912." I quote from one of those excessively optimistic persons whose aim seems to be to delude simple city folk into the idea that farming is one life-long picnic.

You'd think to read some of the stuff that all the farmer has to do is to "press the button" and let gasoline engines and dynamos do the rest.

You'd think that his chief occupation was to push out bunches and bushels and bags full of produce to eager consumers standing at his back door, all with baskets in one hand and bills in the other.

You and I, who are in and of it, know that "it ain't no such thing." Moreover, we know that these well-meaning boomers of country life, who minimize the toil and magnify the rewards of farming are doing more harm than good. They are building up false hopes which are certain of extinction in the first cold wind of actual experience.

They are urging innocently ignorant people to loss which they can't afford and to unhappiness which no one can afford.

For a long course of years the tendency of writers was to pity or sneer at the farmer. He was caricatured in type and picture. He was held up as an example of underhandness, of slowness of hand-to-mouth existence. The whole world of books and papers was filled with the explicit or implied idea that farming was a "low-down" business and that the farmer was only one little step higher than a pauper.

Then, twenty or so years ago, there came a change. From unjust depreciation of farm life the pen and pencil shovers pranced over to the opposite side of the arena and suddenly became vociferous boomers for it.

As they went to the extreme in the old days of ridicule and caricature, so they are going to extremes now. Farming isn't all "machinery" instead of drudgery. Nor is it all "science instead of guess-work."

I've just come in from a morning tour of five acres of gardens. For twenty years I've been living with those five acres. I've summered them and wintered them. I've had them soil analyzed and I've tried them out in all sorts of practice. I know what forms of plant-food are present in them in ample supply and what are missing. I know what analysis and experience both tell me are suitable areas for cabbage and for corn and for asparagus and for green peas, etc., etc. I know what analysis and experience dictate as the most adequate and economical methods of supplying deficiencies. In other words, I'm farming those five acres by "science instead of guess-work."

Well, to begin with, there are about three acres of corn and beans and potatoes, a large part of which are either killed or badly hurt by the four frosts which this "rare June" has, thus far, shook out of its ice-box over my gardens.

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—Mrs. EMMA BAILEY, Alton Station, Ky.

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—Mrs. F. M. THORN, Deism, No. Dak.

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are awarded fairly in these modern times but that fairness did not prevail in every instance in the long ago. There is a case in point for illustration.

Many years ago, just forty-four to be exact, at the first session of the first evening school in New London, there was a spelling contest among the students the prize being a Webster Unabridged Dictionary. Towards the end of the term the contest took place, consisting of forty words. Three of the pupils were perfect in their contest and were continued until the next evening. One of the contestants was a cripple and naturally sympathy was with him and even his associate would not have been wiser to have him declared the winner, but they had no desire to belittle their own efficiency, and came the next night prepared to win the honor if possible. It was to be another contest with forty words as the limit. Before the contest began one of the money pupils looked into the dictionary and found nearly inscribed on the fly leaf that the book knowledge had been awarded to the crippled young man for proficiency in spelling. The other two contestants did not want to protest and had no desire to create any feeling.

They agreed to submit incorrectly the very first word submitted and thereby inform the committee that they were on the game. The three pupils were lined up and the contest opened. The first word was given out, missed and the contestant was out of the race. The same game was played by his wise associate and the boy with his name in the book was the only contestant standing. He of course spelled the word correctly and the prize was promptly awarded. Then there was a brief session of the committee and they spoke in words of praise of the efforts of the defeated contestants and as sort of healing plaster presented to each a two years' membership in the New London Library Association, which was located in the little room on the third floor of the city hall building, now occupied by the highway commissioner.

NEW BOOKS.

Well, French Newspaper Reader, By Felix Well, instructor in French, College of the City of New York. Cloth 12mo, 266 pages, with map, illustrations, notes, exercises, conversational questions, and vocabulary. American Book Co., New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago. Price 50c.

A carefully graded collection of new and interesting material, selected only from the best newspapers and magazines—Le Temps, Le Matin, L'Illustration, La Revue Bleue, and L'Opinion. Many of the articles are from the pen of the foremost writers in France, and the source of each extract is indicated. The selections cover a great variety of subjects—current events, floods, sporting news, editorials, politics, literature, drama, commercial news, advertisements, etc.

Clark's Laboratory Manual in General Science, By Bertha M. Clark, Ph.D., head of science department, William Penn High School for Girls, Philadelphia, Pa. Cloth 12mo, 96 pages. American Book Co., New York, Cincinnati and Chicago. Price 40c.

In this manual eighty-nine experiments are presented in the form of directions, designed to make the pupil familiar with some of the facts and theories of general science. The experiments, which are accompanied by full directions, can easily be performed with simple apparatus. The work is above all interesting, affording a comprehension of the principles underlying important matters of everyday concern. Among the subjects treated are temperature, ventilation, composition and purity of foods, purification of water, lenses and photographic paper, tests for eyesight and hearing, some principles of machines, soap making, baking soda, bleaching powders, dyeing, artificial coloring and preservatives in foods, sound, electricity, etc.

Yet there are compensations for us even in defeat. You remember the scared sheep who in a night storm who begged to be allowed a light in her cabin, because she didn't want "to drown in the dark." If we've got to meet disaster, I, for one, would rather meet it out in the open fields and the wide country than in a stuffy store or office or factory. There's something in having plenty of room to fight in—or to run, if one has to!

I don't want to be driven up a tree, but, if the bears come, I like to know that there are a few trees in sight, up one of which I might scramble if that should seem prudent.

We haven't yet reached the point where we can discount all the evils of the universe, nor cure all its ills, either by science or with machinery. There are enough good things to be said about farming—which are also true things—without going too far afield after false hopes. Lord knows the country wants more farmers and better farmers. It doesn't want untrained or incompetent men cajoled into taking up the work through unduly rose-colored pictures or utopian impossibilities. It is the unexpected which happens; and it is just as likely to happen up here on Podunk Heights as on Main street or Fourth Avenue.

PINE GROVE SAVED.

This Means That Cherry Park is to Be Preserved in All of its Beauty.

Dr. Flint, who recently purchased Cherry Park, has finally bought from G. C. Beckwith & Sons of Napaug the timber rights in the pine forest which had been sold to them previous to the disposal of the real estate. This is one of the finest pine groves in Connecticut, and standing on the shores of Cherry pond, it made a beautiful place of that part of the park. The timber was very valuable and it must have added a good bit of money to the purchase price which Dr. Flint has had to pay.

Advice to Mothers

Have you had baby's photograph taken? It's an art to take baby's photograph as it should be taken. To catch his regular little smile, his pretty little dimple. Such photographs become prized remembrances of babyhood's days in years to come. We have had years of experience in photographing children. They always look their best when we take them. No troublesome posing. Snap them in a jiffy.

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Isn't that a record for Fels-Naptha to be proud of? Then there's the saving in health, in the wear of clothes, and in lots of other ways as well. More than a million women are using Fels-Naptha every wash-day.

It takes Fels-Naptha in cold or lukewarm water about half the time it would take by the old-fashioned hot-water way. Try it next wash-day yourself. Soap your white clothes with Fels-Naptha, roll them and let them soak for 30 minutes. Then give a light rub, rinse thoroughly, and hang on the line.

No hot fire to blister your face, no steaming suds to scald your hands, no nauseating smell about the house, no back-breaking work over the washboard. Isn't it worth trying?

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